



## COVID-19 Return-to-School Protocol

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ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

# St John's Return-to-School Protocol

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The St John's College COVID-19 Task Team has been hard at work preparing the Campus for the safe return of staff and students in each section of the School and implementing our comprehensive set of COVID-19 compliance protocols.

As we move back into face-to-face teaching, we must create and maintain a daily regime that protects everyone at School. We are acutely aware that the new variant of COVID is a reality, and in Gauteng, we remain in the full eye of the storm of the second wave. This new virulent strain seems to transmit quickly and impacts younger people.

We are awaiting the Department of Basic Education to finalise its updated protocols and regulations for the return-to-school. The draft guidelines for classroom protocols indicate that desks must be 1m apart and that a maximum of 50 people may gather indoors, and 100 outdoors. St John's College has met and will continue to meet, and exceed, all guidelines to keep our community safe.

St John's has an excellent medical team to guide us. Sr Nomathemba Mabaso has led this team with great wisdom and expertise since the COVID-19 outbreak early last year. We thank her and her team for their hard work and care as well as their detailed planning that aims to provide a disciplined and transmission free school environment.

Mr Alan Lion-Cachet is working with the Heads of Sport and the COVID Task Team to finalise an appropriate, compliant and safe return to a sporting programme. Dr Ben Oosthuizen is supervising the return to music and choir protocols across all schools. These programmes will be communicated as soon as they are finalised.

We ask that all members of our community take all protocols outlined in this document seriously, and that we act responsibly and work collectively to ensure a clear, strong regime is followed at St John's every day. We have the highest expectations for compliance, and we will enforce all protocols and regulations at all times.

1. The **proper wearing of appropriate three-layer face masks** is compulsory at all times by everyone on Campus. The wearing of a bandana or 'buff' as is not permitted.
2. **Social distancing**, both in class and outside of the classroom, is vital and will be enforced by staff daily.
3. We will insist on **regular hand sanitising and cleaning of all learning surfaces** under our care and control. Everyone will be required to sanitise on entering a venue, and desks will be swabbed by students before and after each lesson.
4. It is compulsory for everyone to **complete the daily screening app** and procedures at the relevant entrance points to their schools.
5. While we can enforce these protocols at School, we ask that we as a community continue to play our part off campus by staying at home, not attending group gatherings and following these basic protocols to ensure the safety of all.

This COVID-19 School Protocol document aims to ensure a safe learning and working environment for all at St John's and to mitigate against the risk of the spread of COVID-19 within the St John's community.

We stand ready to receive our staff and students back in a safe and structured manner.

This document summarises the key measures we are taking to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. All students, parents and staff are required to read this protocol and adhere to its measures to sustain a healthy and safe College campus at all times. It is up to us as a community to join together in a partnership pact to respond responsibly and transparently to protect the health and wellbeing of all within the St John's community.

We look forward to welcoming staff and students back to our magnificent St John's College campus while continuing to offer online teaching support to those students who may not be able to return-to-school.

*Lux Vita Caritas*

**Stuart West**  
Executive Head

## What Are Coronaviruses?

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Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

## What Is COVID-19?

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SARS-CoV-2 is a new strain of Coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. COVID-19 was identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China, in 2019.

## What are the Symptoms?

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Have you been in contact with anyone who has been confirmed positive by a COVID19 test? Symptoms can include fever, cough, headache, sore throat, loss of taste and smell, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, body aches and fatigue.

Symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as fourteen days after exposure.

Special care should be taken if you have an existing condition such as diabetes, hypertension, lung, heart or any other disease.

## How is it Spread?

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Human Coronaviruses are most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- the air by coughing and sneezing,
- close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands, and by
- touching an object or surface with the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

## What are the Prevention Measures?

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- We are currently awaiting the roll-out of the vaccine to prevent COVID-19 disease. But until then, established hygienic and physical distance measures must be maintained:
- Correct wearing of a triple-layer face mask at all times.
- Regular washing of hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- The use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Washing or sanitising hands after touching or removing your face mask.
- The covering of the nose and mouth with a flexed elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- The avoidance of touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- The cleaning and disinfecting of objects and surfaces that are frequently touched.
- The avoidance gatherings or close contact with other persons.

## Responsibility of the School

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St John's College adheres to guidelines *The Standard Operating Procedure for the Containment and Measurement of COVID-19 for Schools and Communities* issued by the Department of Basic Education in September 2020.

The decision to permit students and staff to return-to-school has been taken with the clear knowledge of the need to balance the health risks that students and staff may be exposed to with knowing that the students *need* to return to the school environment. This need is based on the need for education as well as the need for our children to a part of their social groups.

## The Health Measures in Place

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- There is a requirement of a physical distance of at least 1.5 metres between students outside the classroom at all times during the school day.
- Class teachers have strict classroom seating plans in place where desks are no less than 1m apart. These seating plans are registered each day to enable tracking of possible infection transmissions in the case of a positive student.
- The COVID-19 Compliance Officer has determined the floor space in square metres of each venue to determine the number of people that may be inside a venue at any given time, ensuring adequate space available to observe physical distancing. There is a sign displaying this information at the entrance to each venue.
- The wearing of a tripe-layer face mask by everyone on Campus at all times will be compulsory.
- Everyone will be required to wash or sanitise their hands as they enter the School.
- All classrooms will be sanitised prior to the start of the school day.
- The use of sanitiser or handwashing will be required upon entering and exiting classrooms during the school day.
- An appropriate level of cleaning of the School will take place at regular and reasonable intervals.
- Ongoing training of all staff and students will take place, including general hygiene requirements such as general cleanliness, how to wash hands correctly, respiratory etiquette, standing at least 1.5 metres apart from each other at all times, and not to talk directly into people's faces.
- Gatherings of more than 50 people at any time will be avoided. Any gatherings deemed necessary must adhere to the social distancing protocols.
- No mass events or public events will be held, including weddings or funerals on Campus.
- **We are currently awaiting the guidelines from the Department of Basic Education regarding all sport, cultural and other school activities. These will be communicated as soon as they become available.**
- Parents are required to remain in their vehicles during drop-off and pick-up times and will be only allowed access to the School by appointment.
- The access of visitors to the School will only be granted access to the School by appointment.

## Procedures for Ill Students and Staff

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- No staff member or student is to come to School if they have a raised temperature (37.8 degrees or above) or display any COVID-19 symptoms. Staff and students with a cough, shortness of breath or fever, or who have family members who are confirmed positive or displaying these symptoms, must remain at home and consult their family medical practitioner for advice. The School must be informed and updated of any staff member or student's medical prognosis and condition if they are not at School.
- If staff feel ill at home, they must report to their medical practitioner or access self-help by contacting the COVID-19 Hotline 0800 029 999 or WhatsApp "Hi" to 0600 123 456 for further guidance. They must follow the medical doctor's instruction and further directives and advise their respective line manager and Head.
- If feeling ill at School, staff and students must report to the College Sanatorium or designated sick bay areas for a medical assessment. Their respective Head of Department, Housemaster and Head are to be advised. In the case of a Centenary Scholar, Mr Mickey Masehgo is to be notified immediately.
- The nursing staff and doctor at the Sanatorium, in line with international protocols governing the management of COVID-19, will make an assessment and decision with respect to any initial treatment and isolation, in liaison with medical authorities, and in consultation with the staff or student's family.
- Students and staff reporting symptoms will not be able to return to the School until a doctor's note confirming that they are not infected with COVID-19 virus can be presented to their respective Housemaster or Head.
- The management of any staff or student displaying COVID-19 symptoms or having a confirmed case of COVID-19 must be carried out in accordance with **The Standard Operating Procedure for the Containment and Measurement of COVID-19 for Schools and Communities** issued by the Department of Basic Education in September 2020.

## Procedure for any staff or students reporting that they are COVID-19 infected or have been exposed to a person infected with COVID-19

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When a staff member or student receives information that they are COVID-19 positive or have been in close contact with a person infected with COVID-19, they must stay put in the venue where they received the news. They must immediately call their respective Head, Housemaster, teacher or anyone not in that venue on the phone to alert them about a potential infection.

Prior to meeting with the potential COVID-19 infected person the Sanitorium must be called for advice and assistance. The Sanitorium staff will take over and ensure swift and safe quarantining and assessment of a potential COVID-19 infected person. The Department of Health and / or local health officials must be notified.

**Official Toll-Free Call Centre:** 0800 029 999

**Clinicians Hotline:** 082 883 9920

**Official WhatsApp Help Service:** Send Hi to 0600 123 456 on WhatsApp or share this link: <https://wa.me/27600123456?text=Hi>

The respective Head will ask all other occupants of the venue to evacuate the building and be held in isolation until further notice. Potential COVID-19 infected persons will be requested to give a detailed list of all possible persons that they may have come into close contact with at School, home and any other places in the last 10 days.

All close contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case are required to be interviewed by our medical team, and then will be advised to either monitor their symptoms, self-isolate or self-test. They may not attend School. Students who are not contacts of a confirmed case should not be prevented from attending School.

When the potential infected person has been removed from the venue, the venue must be disinfected and sanitised for clearing of any potential COVID-19 contamination in the building.

The respective Head will give the instructions when it is safe to return.



## Return-to-School

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It is important for the St John's College community to understand the seriousness of the current situation and the vital need for the respect of the health of others at School and their wider families.

**While we are able to enforce COVID-19 protocols at School for the sake of the greater St John's College community, we request that our students and their families continue to practice these protocols that have been put in place by our School and government at home.**

There are clear routines, rules and hygiene protocols that must be adhered to at all times on Campus. These rules and protocols will be adapted and refined through experience and directives. There will be inconveniences and we must all accept the new normal of the school day.

No staff member or student is to come to School if they have a raised temperature (37.8 degrees or above), or display any other of the COVID-19 symptoms.

Staff and students with a cough, shortness of breath or fever, or who have family members displaying these symptoms, must remain at home and consult their family medical practitioner for advice. The School must be informed and updated of any staff member or student's medical prognosis and condition if they are not at School.

Staff members or students who have underlying medical conditions which place them at increased risk in relation to contracting the virus (e.g. TB, asthma, HIV) must engage with their immediate Head or line manager and the Human Resources Manager (in the case of staff), or their respective Housemaster or Head (in the case of students), with a view to special arrangements being made and for possible continued remote working or learning. Any such approaches will be treated in strictest confidence.

**Parents are not to send sick or at-risk students to School.** Attendance registers will be taken in each section of the school first thing in the morning and the School will contact the parents or guardians of absent students to ascertain the reason for non-attendance, if this has not been provided beforehand.

If a student or staff member is assessed as sick during the school day, the parents or guardians will be notified. The parents or guardians are to collect the students from School without delay. Students will be safeguarded in a designated isolation area until collected. Boarders who cannot return home due to exceptional circumstances will be quarantined and follow the online teaching programme.

Students and staff members who were in close proximity to the sick person will be informed, venues used will be disinfected and an assessment will be made by the Head, in consultation with medical professionals, as to further steps to be taken.

### The daily hygiene and social protocols to be followed at school:

- The compulsory and correct wearing of appropriate fitted face masks (at least triple-layered cloth, no 'buffs'). Staff and students must arrive at School wearing appropriate face masks. Staff and students must wear a cloth face mask on Campus at all times.
- Staff and students must ensure the correct use of masks and the changing thereof. Staff and students must keep their cloth face masks in a hygienic state and change their cloth face masks daily. Staff and students may not exchange face masks with other persons. No staff or student will be allowed to enter a building, venue, or premises, if they are not wearing a cloth mask.
- Boarders will be screened each morning before School and before lights out each evening.
- Day students and staff are to bring pre-packed break snacks and lunch from home unless they have signed up for hot lunch.
- The Tuck Shop is closed until further notice.
- Uniform items must be washed daily, where possible.

## Start and End of Day

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All students and staff must complete the St John's College Health Screening each morning via the app before arriving at School. The app can be downloaded at [rollcall.sjc.co.za](http://rollcall.sjc.co.za). The completed screening process will either grant access to the Campus, determine the need for a medical evaluation before being allowed onto Campus, or require students or staff to leave the property immediately and return home. Boarders will be screened each morning before School and before lights out each evening.

The various schools will ensure staggered starting and leaving times across the Campus. No congregation of students or parents will be permitted at school gates, entrances or car parks. The entrances to the various schools will be as follows:

**Sixth Form and College:** Main Gate in Tee Lane, off St John's Road

**Prep:** Entrance via the gate at Elm Street and St David Road and exit via St Mark Road

**Pre-Prep:** usual entrance off St Patrick Road

**The Bridge:** usual entrance off St David Road

The creation of extra 'drop and go' areas at each school will be investigated to facilitate easier dropping and collecting of students.

## Hygiene Protocols

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- Social distancing must be adhered to at all times and no group gatherings that compromise social distancing protocols will be allowed.
- Hands must be washed regularly with soap and water or sanitiser.
- Hands must be washed or sanitised after touching or removing a facemask.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Wash hands immediately after touching the face mask.
- Coughing and sneezing into bent elbow or tissue.
- The safe disposal of tissues, disposable material, surface wipes, etc. in designated bins.
- No sharing of food.
- No sharing of phones, devices, books, stationery, water bottles or any other resources that could spread the virus.
- All items and materials that are taken home (school bags, books, readers, devices, stationery) must be wiped down and sanitised before returning to School the next day.
- Desks and work areas to be wiped down at the start and end of each lesson.
- Stairs, corridors and passageways - procedures and signage are in place to maintain social distancing and to avoid contact.

## Procurement

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St John's College has procured the following items ahead of the reopening of the campus:

- Face masks have been made available to all staff and Centenary Scholarship students. The school shop has masks available for purchase by students, families and visitors.
- Gloves have been provided for staff who need them.
- Bleach-based disinfectant solution for surface cleaning.
- Sanitiser dispensers for each school entrance, office, teaching venue and boarding house corridors. Stocked supplies of sanitiser refills and portable bottles of sanitiser for general use.
- Soap dispensers and disposable paper towels.
- Cleaning materials for regular venue cleaning.
- Closed bins in each venue for compromised waste material.

## Daily Cleaning Procedures

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- Work surfaces in the classrooms will be wiped down between lessons.
- Ablutions to be cleaned and sanitised three times per day. Only a limited number of ablution facilities will be opened, depending upon the number of students and staff on Campus. Staff and students will be notified of which facilities will be open each day.
- Daily disinfection and cleaning of all commonly touched surfaces (ie; door handles, handrails and balustrades, light switches)
- The emptying of closed bins in venues each day.
- Dustbins to be disinfected daily.

## Boarding

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- Boarding will reopen for those grades and forms returning to School as per a phased return.
- Strict hygiene and social distancing protocols will be in place.
- All studies have been cleaned and the sleeping and study cubicles comply with the social distancing requirements.
- Meals will be provided according to a staggered timetable to ensure social distancing protocols.
- Each boarder will complete the St John's College Health Screening via the app prior to School and have their temperature checked before lights out each evening. The completed morning check will allow access to academic lessons for the day or determine the need for a medical evaluation at the Sanitorium.

## Dining Rooms

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Clear protocols have been put in place for kitchen staff and meal preparation, as well as guidelines for mealtimes, cleaning of surfaces and utensils in all eating venues.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be provided for boarders and the boarding staff on-duty at mealtimes, with strict distancing and hygiene controls. The same applies to College students who have opted for morning tea and hot lunch.

## Daily Academic Timetable

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Each School will determine their daily timetable during the return-to-school period. The current timetables may be adapted to maximise both the at-school and online learning. Each phase of the School will maintain an online learning programme to ensure students at home are kept up to date with their curriculum.

Individual music lessons may be continued where possible with strict physical distancing and sanitising protocols.

Physical education is important and staff supervised exercise routines will be facilitated in small class groups on the open fields or big venues with clear physical distancing protocols.

## Break Time

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- Break times across the School will be staggered where possible to limit social contact. Teachers will be on duty to supervise break times.
- Students should preferably be outside, observing social distancing. Designated sports fields may be used by students for physical distancing.
- No casual use of libraries or computer centres will be permitted. These can only be used for educational resources. Common work areas may be used if strict physical distancing measures are adhered to.
- Students must use their own devices where possible. Communal computers are to be wiped down after use.
- If raining all students are to report to the designated indoor areas in each School.

## Areas out of bounds for students during the school day

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- All sports facilities, the gym and pools, except for designated sports fields
- The Tuck Shop area and The Johannian Club gardens, except for Sixth Form
- No loitering in corridors or passageways
- Classrooms at break times

We ask that parents collect their children promptly after they have finished their school day.

## Tuck Shop

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The Tuck Shop will remain closed and the vending machines remain empty. Students are to provide their own lunch and snacks daily. Boarders will be provided with meals and snacks.

## The Academy

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The Academy is a critical component of St John's College and the St John's community. The Academy will reopen as soon as it is possible.

## Extra Curricular Programmes

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Safe sporting, cultural and other activity programmes will be communicated by the Heads of the relevant schools.

## Visitors to the College

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Visitors will only be allowed access to the Campus with a prior appointment. Visitors will be required to sanitise, undergo a compulsory screening and wear a face mask at all times while on Campus.

## Fake News and Stigma

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Once again, we encourage our community to rely on the reliable sources listed above for information regarding COVID-19.

St John's College is an inclusive environment, and as per our Dignity and Anti-Discrimination Policy, will not tolerate any social stigma or discrimination towards anyone in our community.

## COVID-19 Updates

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St John's College has ensured that all staff have the most up-to-date information on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19. **For updates, and the latest information, please refer to the following resources:**

National Department of Health: <http://www.health.gov.za>

National Institute for Communicable Diseases: <https://www.nicd.ac.za>

Corona Virus Hotline Number: **0800 02 99 99**

Send Hi to WhatsApp number: **0600 123 456**